

MEDICAL OFFICER

To the Chairman and Members of the
Urban District Council.

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GENTLEMEN,—

It is again
 An honor and my privilege to present you with an
 Annual Report as Medical Officer of Health for the
 Urban Sanitary District of Sherborne. I believe the
 year of 1897, which in many respects is a remarkable
 year, will not as far as its Sanitary history is con-
 cerned, for this District, be a very eventful one, or
 as far as I am aware, can be considered a record one
 in any degree.

I will commence by taking the vital statistics, which are as follows ;—

MORTALITY.—The total number of Deaths registered as occurring within the District were 81—and may be shown by the following tables:—

1st Quarter.—Males, 11. Females, 12.—23.

2nd " " 7. " 12.—19.

3rd	7.	8.—15.
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4th. ,, ,, 15. ,, 9 — 24.

Males.	40.	Females	41.	81	Total
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DEATHS OCCURRING IN INSTITUTIONS.

	1st Cr.	2nd	3rd	4th	
The Yeatman Hospital	...	3	2	3	2 — 10
The Alms House ...	...	0	0	0	1 — 1
The Union Workhouse	...	3	3	3	1 — 9
		5	5	6	4 20

DEATHS OF PERSONS NOT BELONGING TO THE DISTRICT.

1st Quarter, 5; 2nd, 3; 3rd, 7; 4th, 2.
Total, 17.

After deducting the deaths of persons not belonging to the District, the actual number for the year is 64, and the Annual Death Rate is 11.63 per 1000 of the Population.

During the last five years, 104 has been the highest and 71 the lowest number of deaths registered during the year.

AGES AT WHICH DEATH OCCURRED.

Under 1 Year.	1 year under 5 years	5 years under 15 years	15 years under 25 years	25 years under 65 years	65 yrs. and Upwds.
		1st Quarter.			
3	3	2	0	8	7
		2nd Quarter.			
2	0	0	0	9	8
		3rd Quarter.			
1		2	0	8	3
		4th Quarter.			
4	2	1	4	3	10
10	6	5	4	28	28

above were 8, over 80 years of age
3 - the oldest being 87 years

RH.

Cerebral	...	3	3	2	—	8
Heart Disease	...	0	1	0	1	2
Influenza	...	0	1	2	0	3
Cancer	...	0	0	0	0	0
Typhoid	...	1	0	0	0	0
Scarlet Fever	...	0	0	0	3	3
Measles	...	0	0	0	0	0
Whooping Cough	...	9	7	7	10	33
Old Age & Gen'l Cases		23	19	15	24	81

In the preceding table there were included five deaths from Accident or the result of violence—there were none due to self-destruction.

BIRTHS.

1st Quarter.—Male, 22. Females, 17. — 39

1st Quarter.	—	Male, 22.	Females, 17.	—	39
2nd	„	7.	„	12.	— 19

2nd	„	„	11.	„	12.	13.
3rd	„	„	14.	„	9.	— 23

3rd	„	„	16.	„	15. — 32
4th	„	„	17.	„	

Males	60.	Females.	53.	113
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The Annual Birthrate being 20·54 per 1000 of the population.

During the last six years the highest number of births for the year has been 148, and the lowest 112 for the district.

SICKNESS.

I feel I can say without contradiction, that the year has been an exceptionally healthy one I mean this in a general sense. It is true the latter part was marked by an epidemic of measles, but this principally affected children. The district was entirely free from Whooping Cough throughout the whole year, and there were only two cases of Scarlet Fever, which occurred in the last quarter. And I am happy to state there was not a case of Diphtheria. There were some case of Enteric Fever, but they were mild and of a sporadic character, it never threatened an epidemic form. As far as possible I endeavoured in all the cases to trace out the origin of the infection. The first case was in the first quarter, and was evidently brought into the town by a boy on a visit, he made a quick recovery and no other case occurred until the second quarter, when there were four cases, two of them were in a dwelling house at the West Mill near to the outfall of the Sewage System, and were evidently caused by emanations from the residuum of the sewage which was being removed, in my opinion in a too liquid form and was very offensive from the tanks, and was taken daily in front of the door of the dwelling-house. I reported upon this matter at the time to your authority, and means were directly taken to remedy it and stop further infection, with good results, the other two cases which occurred about the same time were undoubtedly due to the same source of infection. I am strongly of opinion, that a serious epidemic was averted by the timely and energetic means adopted as soon as the mischief was discovered. The other cases that occurred were of a very mild type and mostly situated in the same locality--the upper part of the town--and although I was not able to detect the cause. I felt they were most probably due to defective drainage and sanitary arrangements, as they chiefly occurred in very old houses and dilapidated premises, the drainage in the neighbourhood has since been much improved, and fortunately, no other case has appeared, at this part of the Town as I have said before Measles occurred as an epidemic

during the last Quarter and on the 22nd of Oct. As it appeared to be rapidly increasing I deemed it necessary to close the Elementary Schools within the district, and gave the necessary certificates. If I may be allowed I would take this opportunity of remarking that it would be better for various reasons, and certainly more upholding the dignity of the Urban District Council, if official, stamped paper was supplied to the medical Officer of health, to be used for these and similar purposes.

I am thankful to be able to state that the fatality from Measles was very low, out of about 322 cases there were only three deaths, and two of these were of infants, that were somewhat previously delicate. As Measles at no very distant date was considered to be one of the most fatal, of the Zymotic class diseases, exacting year by year a large sacrifice of infant life, I am inclined to attribute the immunity on this occasion very much to the advantage of sanitary Science and the adoption of the Notification of Infectious Diseases Act, and the early closing of the schools.

I am sorry I cannot state that the District has been free from periodical visits of that dire disease, Influenza, which made its appearance first about nine years ago and from this disease (Influenza) and its consequences, two deaths resulted, and they were of persons of advanced age.

SANITARY WORK OF THE YEAR.

During the year I have made frequent visits and inspection of houses in various parts of the District and reported matters in my journal, which received the attention of your board, and I do not think I have anything further to remark upon, except the supply of conduit water, which for many years, situated in the centre of the Town, and always running, freely used by the public, derived altogether from a different source to the general Town supply.

It was alleged in October that the Conduit water had become impure I visited Kennel-Barton where the spring head is situated and from what I saw and information I received, I came to the conclusion that there was strong suspicion of the water being contaminated by Organic matter at its course and also in transit to the conduit. Under the circumstances as I consider there is an ample supply of Town water which is always under supervision, it would be better for the present to cut off the supply from the spring, and substitute the Town supply. I believe an analysis has been obtained of various samples of this water but at present I have not heard the result.

The Inspector of Nuisances journal shows that he has been active in his work and relates principally to cases of nuisance arising from choking of water closets, pipes, drains, sinks, the emptying of privy vaults, cess pools, filthy and badly drained stables, and the removal of rubbish heaps. No doubt the over-flowing dust-bin and heaps of rubbish undergoing decomposition are the most common nuisances, and withal the most prolific cause of disease. Vigilant Sanitary Inspection, increased attention to cleanliness, ventilation and drainage, during the late epidemic of measles, was the means of keeping down the infection as much as possible from spreading and rendered the fatality much below the average.

There has been an abundant, an ample supply of an excellent potable water throughout the whole year, and there can be no doubt as to its excellent quality for drinking and all other dietetic purposes, it is a hard water but this does not affect its purity or excellence for all domestic purposes.

GENERAL REMARKS.

I am not aware that there is anything in the foregoing report which can be construed otherwise than as a testimony of your strenuous endeavours as a council to do all in your power to promote the public health and I feel every confidence there would be no relaxation in your efforts to safeguard the district against the invasion of disease, I feel I may therefore be allowed to make one or two suggestions. First and foremost I would strongly advocate the Institution of an Isolation Hospital, whilst I fully recognize the benefit of the Notification of Infectious Diseases which gives one the opportunity of coping with disease at the very onset, nevertheless a great deal is lost, or to say the least of it, the full benefit of the Act is not obtained on account of the insufficiency of means of Isolation of Infectious cases. It appears to me that an Infectious Hospital, of sufficient size, would in the end, be a great saving of public money, and very possibly of life itself.

I also still feel as I have referred in previous reports, to the great need of good wholesome cottage accommodation in the District for the working classes. I believe it would be a great assistance to public work, if there was a revision of the Nomenclature of the Town. I would again refer to the great want of Bye-laws:— I would state that in all cases where there has been infectious disease, Disinfectants have been freely supplied by your authority.

In conclusion I would again express my thankfulness for the courtesy I have received from your Council and its officers at all times in the discharge of my duties, as without this I feel it would be impossible to hope for success in my endeavours to